# THE FREEDOM OF THE Fair Sex ASSERTED: OR, WOMAN THE CROWN OF THE Creation.

In a LETTER to a Young LADY.

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*Spem fecit, hoc recipi me quoque poſſe modo.* Ovid.

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# THE FREEDOM OF THE Fair Sex ASSERTED.

*MADAM!*

YOUR Commands can never Fail to Oblige barely by being Yours; the Relation is so Indearing, and they derive such Charms from their Original. You Trust not however to these borrow'd Beauties, but Endow them with intrinsick Excellence; like First Principles, they are Embrac'd as soon as Propos'd, for the Reason of them is self Evident.

One would Contemplate the Ladies, methinks, of meer Choice, and not wait for an Obligation to intend so Divine a Subject; especially, *Madam!* who

has the Advantage of Knowing You, and can thereby inrich his Mind with so bright a Train of Ideas. But when moreover, You Require it, Will not the very Stones Obey! Will not Matter it self dissolve into Meditation!

I am a wonderful Instance my Self, of the greatness of your Power; that never Thought in my Life, but upon your Account; and never Thought of any thing beside You, but at your Command; even what I am now doing for its Birth, acknowledges your Authority; and for its Success, depends upon your Influence.

Of all the Parts of the Creation that are hoisted either through Ignorance or Humour, none suffer so notoriously as the Ladies; and the Reason is, because the same degree of Contempt, consider'd absolutely, and in it self, is lessen'd or aggravated always in Proportion to the real Vanity of its Object; consequently, when the best things happen to be [illegible]'d, the Injury they Receive [illegible] needs be greater than if it were Offer'd in the [illegible] manner to those of inferior Account. This is [illegible] which makes Blasphemy Sinful; tho' indeed, every thing Perfect in its Kind, ought to be held in a manner Sacred; and what has no Fault, cannot be Censur'd without a great One.

This [illegible] Usage of the Ladies, is carried on Two ways; either by a [illegible] Transient [illegible]

 Raillery,

Raillery, or by more Serious and Settl'd Invectives: And accordingly 'tis pursu'd by Two sorts of Men. Those who take up with the former, are such as Behave not upon Principle, and with Sobriety, but give only a Loose to Censure, and Detraction, without any manner of inward Prejudice or Dislike. Nay, so far are they from that, as to Admire at least, if not Adore, the Party they so much Decry; which nevertheless they do, to present a Taste Forsooth of their great Wit, and give an agreeable Relish to Conversation. 'Tis their Business to Interpret every thing in the worst Sense it will bear; and if it will not admit an ill Construction, yet they scruple not to make it Nonsense, choosing rather to Discover their Hypocrisy, than Conceal their Folly. Thus with them, all that becoming Conduct and mutual Respect, observ'd among the Ladies, is meer Emptiness and Formality; a little Freedom of Talk with our Sex, is down-right Impudence. Innocence of Behaviour is all Trick and Design, and Modesty no more than Affectation. In Short, as every Vertue has its Counterfeit, so every Woman that appears Vertuous, has, nothing of it, they suppose, besides the Appearance. This Practice looks abominable, at first sight, and carries Guilt in its very Countenance. 'Tis a plain Composition of Hypocrisy and Vanity; and there is no third Ingredient can possibly make the whole more Odious than it is. As for those who engage in such a Conversation as this, they can have no Hopes

to be sure of finding Favour at the Ladies Hands. (and that's a lamentable kind of Despair indeed) And for what is Future, they must be left with a Company of Pagans to the meer Mercy of Heaven. Nor will this look Extravagant, after Consideration, that the Main of all modern Wit is made up of Blasphemy against GOD, and Raillery upon Women: And, can it be unreasonable to Conclude each Vice of a like Nature, when they are both found so close in Company together?

But, the Design of this Letter, if so Small a Trifle may pretend to any, is not to Expose such as Wilfully Misrepresent the Sex, (it would be unpardonable Presumption to attempt any thing of that Nature, which they themselves have already perform'd with so good Success) but to Rectify the Judgment of others, who innocently enough Misunderstand it; and express a much less Dislike at the General Conduct of the Ladies, than they retain in their Minds upon that Account. This, in a great measure, is owing to an Original Mistake about the proper Duty of Woman, and what her Obligations are in the common Circumstances of Human Life. For, let her ordinary Deportment never so exactly Answer her real Duty; yet, if that be once Mistaken, it's plain, the whole Course and Tenour of her Actions will be Condemn'd. And, 'tis no new thing among us, first to lay down false, or uncertain Suppositions of our own, and afterwards wonder at the unaccountable Consequence.

That

That there is a Duty incumbent on the Side of Woman, that ſhe Naturally Owes us ſome ſort of Aſſiſtance, or other, is no more than what all Acknowledge. The Queſtion is, in what Particulars, this Duty of hers Conſiſts; and after what Manner, the Aſſiſtance ſhe Owes, ought to be made good.

'Tis a receiv'd Opinion, I know, that Woman is Born to Labour, and Oblig'd to Drudgery; that ſhe is excus'd from no Difficulties Man is obnoxious to, but ought to ſhare alike with him in all the burthenſome Affairs of Human Life. Now, indeed, if the Duty intended, were an Obligation on her Part, to Comply with every arbitrary Injunction Man might Impoſe; or Submit to every extravagant Service he might Require, there wou'd then appear ſome colour of Reaſon for admitting this Doctrine; but certainly the Caſe is otherwiſe, and Women can never ſtand in the ſame Relation to us, with the brutiſh Herd: Their Province, in ſhort, is quite diſtinct from ours, adapted to a Diſtinction of Nature and Abilities; and however by Compulſion or Compact, it comes to paſs, that Woman frequently engages in Buſineſs, belonging peculiarly to our Sex, there are nevertheleſs, Viſible Bounds ſet to her Obligations; and upon Nice Inquiry it will appear, ſhe is oblig'd to no Particulars, (at leaſt not in the ſame manner) as ſhe ſtands related to Man, that he is oblig'd to, in his relation to her: So that tho' ſome kind of Aſſiſtance be due, 'tis made Payable however, in quite another manner, than has been

been all along suppos'd, viz. *In such a manner as will prove much more Easie and Natural to her self, as well as more Useful and Advantageous to us.*

Let us suppose it then, the proper Business of Woman, to Cherish us with the Charms of her Conversation, to Compose our Tempers, and Soften our Manners; to Encourage our Hopes, divert our Fears, and Inflame our Affections; to make her self, in fine, every way Amiable; omitting nothing she may safely practise for our Ease and Happiness, without doing Violence to her own Nature: Tho' to say the truth, there is hardly need of such a Limitation; it being impossible for her, to do us any Service by misemploying or abusing her Natural Powers; and she contributes not at all to our Happiness, so long as she continues to Impair her own. Hence it is, that this general View I have given of her Duty (how Unlucky soever it may prove in the end) promises at last Hopefully enough; wherein there occurs nothing to Displease the Ladies, nor any thing to Offend us: But the whole Performance on their side is easy, and the Assistance it procures ourselves, compleat. For nothing testifies a Duty to be truly Stated so much as when it contains no Difficulty, nor any thing Disagreeable, and yet fully answers the Ends of its Institution. How applicable this is to the present Case, will appear in the Conclusion of this Argument.

What

What the original Condition of Woman was in the State of Innocence; and the particular Circumſtances of her Paradiſaical Life; how large her Abilities, and of what extent her Duty, is not eaſily diſcovered; that happy Scene being of no long continuance, and but very little reveal'd relating to it. Whatever Obligations ſhe might lye under in ſuch a State, certain it is, they were ſuch as aroſe from the nature of her Settlement, and ſuch as the Circumſtances, ſhe was plac'd in, requir'd: But Thoſe have been lamentably Chang'd from what they were; her Duty therefore conſequent upon them, muſt neceſſarily change likewiſe: and ſince this great Revolution in her Affairs enſu'd upon the Fall, it will be by examining That, and a few Particulars attending it, that we muſt ſearch out her preſent Duty.

'Tis very remarkable, that the Curſes of Heaven upon the Perſons of fallen Man and Woman, were not denounc'd Promiſcuouſly and alike, upon both; but Succeſſively, and with notorious Diſtinction. Firſt of all GOD addreſſes to *Eve*, and aſſigns her the particular Puniſhment of her Sin; that done, He addreſſes likewiſe to *Adam* (excluſive of his Wife) and Curſes him accordingly. Now, I for my part, am not able to conceive, what Neceſſity there could be for ſo diſtinct an Addreſs, unleſs it bore withal as diſtinct a Relation, nor to what purpoſe in the world there was a ſeparate Cauſe, if they were to be ſhar'd both in common. Beſides, if the Curſes directed only to the perſon of *Adam*, were by any

means applicable to *Eve*, with as good reaſon thoſe too directed to *Eve*, muſt have their influence upon *Adam*, and all his Male Poſterity; and as ſoon as we Men begin to be Affected with hard Labour, and Sorrows in Child-bearing, the Ladies will in return, readily ſubmit to all the Curſes Heaven has inflicted upon us. If then, the Curſes denounc'd againſt *Adam* and *Eve*, in a ſeparate and diſtinct manner, concern'd that Party and that alone, to which they were each of them ſo diſtinctly Directed; and it be the Duty of them both, to make Good the reſpective Curſes, or Commands, they were reſpectively concern'd in (neither of which I preſume can be deny'd) it will follow then, that Man only is oblig'd by his daily Labour and Induſtry, to Secure a neceſſary Subſiſtance, and provide all Accomodations of Life; and this, as well for the Woman; as for himſelf, for the Curſe implying this Obligation is directed only to him, who by conſequence can be the only Party concern'd in it.

Hereabouts I look for an Objection to this purpoſe, viz. That after all my Pains and Care, I have at Beſt but Struggl'd a little to determine barely, wherein the Duty of Woman, with regard to Man, does not conſiſt; as for any thing like a Diſcovery, wherein it does, I have not made the leaſt approaches towards it. I kindly undertake to excuſe the Ladies (however I come by authority to do it) from the more rugged and Ungrateful concerns of Life; but never think of Obliging them in the meantime,

time to more easie and acceptable duties. I take a tender Care to secure them from any Task which might Sully the Serenity of their Mind, or break in upon the Gaiety of their Humour; but yet provide them no other Business, consistent with the preservation of these. I have advanc'd, 'tis true, a kind of Paradox of my own; but, so wild a thing it is, I have already rejected it my Self, neither recommending it from reason nor enforcing it from authority; which looks at least, as if I were not so wedded to it, but I could well enough dispence too, with the Omission of the pretended duties it contains. And at this rate, the Sex is like to prove a very hopeful Assistance, bound to no Certain or Regular Performance, nor Determin'd by any thing but their own Humour: Besides, that in the Method I have hitherto proceeded, 'Tis Impossible ever to Arrive at any conclusion in this Point; at least however to Demonstrate the duty of Woman, such as is pretended; For 'tis plain, there is not one Syllable of what I make her Duty to consist in, contain'd any where, in those Curses directed immediately to Her, out of which it was Infallibly to be Collected.

In order to withstand an Attack of this nature, there is no more Requir'd than to consider.

1st. Were there not the least intimation of the duty of Woman to be met with any were in Scripture; and had she no light from thence, to

Direct

Direct her in her deportment towards Man; 'tis yet very likely, she would, in such a case, have acted, after the same manner, that she stands now Oblig'd to from Revelation: my reason is, because she falls so Naturally into the exactest performance of what proves to be her Duty; she Engages in it, even before she has time to make it her Choice, or can indeed well know what it is. So that Probably matters would not stand in so very Deplorable a posture, even tho' she were left altogether to her self, both as to the manner and measure of assistance, she might think good to accommodate us with.

2ly. It being first of all taken for granted, that the Sex owes us some sort of assistance, by determining once, wherein it does not consist, it is already determin'd wherein it does, viz. In the performance of every thing that can do us service, and is not Included under such determination. In plain words thus; it being prov'd, that 'tis no part of Woman's duty to assist us in a Servile and Laborious way; and it being granted at the same time on all hands, that she Ought to Assist us some way or other, what can remain, but it must be her Duty to do it in such a way, as is agreeable to her Inclinations, and proportion'd to her Abilities, viz, So as it has been before limited?

Now, it would be needless to endeavour a proof, that She is in Duty bound to such a Method of Behaviour; for it appears necessarily so, in the very

very nature of the thing. It would be endleſs to deſcend to particulars in it, becauſe of their great variety, ariſing from ſo various circumſtances, viz. Diverſity of Time and Place; of Perſons, and Humours, &c. Each of which, as they differ, will require a quite different management, and application.

3ly. By examining the Curſes denounc'd upon both Sexes; their import, and particular direction, we may gain indeed a partial knowledge of their reſpective duties, viz. So far as they fall under the nature of a Curſe. But then it were Madneſs by the ſame means to expect any further poſitive information. Woman, we all know, was Created for Man's Aſſiſtance, which Aſſiſtance therefore it became her duty to afford him, not as being a Curſe upon her (for ſuch it never was) but as it was made one end of her very being. Now as there were more, and greater ends propos'd herein, than the meer ſervice of Man, ſo her behaviour ought to bear an agreeable proportion to them. Her duty to Man in the ſtate of Innocence, conſiſted only of ſuch actions as ſuited with her own Nature, at the ſame time that they anſwer'd his occaſions. For it cannot without the greateſt Impiety be Imagin'd, that God would require of her either unnatural, or unneceſſary Performances, that he would deſign her for his own glory, and the good of Man, and yet make her miſerable in her Self, and a Burden to the reſt of the World. 'Tis true, the Fall of Man occaſion'd an extraordinary

Change in his affairs; his former bleſſings withdraw, and Curſes deſcend, thick upon him; yet we no where find him depriv'd of the Society, and Aſſiſtance of his fair Conſort; but when he is driven out of the bliſful Gardens, ſhe takes him by the hand, Wipes away his Tears, and qualifies the Bitterneſs of ſo ſad an Exile. And the ſame Argument that proves her Aſſiſtance, was to be continu'd to us after the Fall, will ſerve to ſhow it Ought to be Manag'd in the ſame Proportion as before, viz. With a Juſt Regard to her own Nature, as well as our preſent Neceſſities. Theſe are two Eſſential properties of that Aſſiſtance, we can in Reaſon expect from her: and what has been Offered here to this purpoſe, has the Advantage of them Both; Wherein is included nothing to the Prejudice of her Faculties, or in Contradiction to her Inclinations; which implies all the ſervice ſhe can doe us, and what is ſufficient to make us happy. Every thing beyond it is Grievous in the Perſormance, and Unprofitable in the Concluſion. To Illuſtrate this, but with one Inſtance; what would be more unnatural than an Army of Beautiful Ladies? The ſoftneſs, and Delicacy of their Bodies diſables them from Bearing Arms; and the tenderneſs of their Affections, Indiſpoſes them for Blood and Ruin; their Limbs made only for Amorous Embraces, will ſoon Sink under the rude Encounters of War. Their Eyes may not wound to Death in the Field; and their ſtrongeſt Charms may

may Fail of Captivating a Barbarous Enemy. Such conſiderations as theſe have Juſtly Secur'd them from the Toil and Fatigue of this Employment. And there is no Need of going Far for Argument, would that Effectualy releaſe them from every other Uneaſie and Afflicting work.

The natural Inſufficiency of Woman for theſe things, directs Plainly to what ſhe is truly capable of. For theſe Qualities, as Uſeleſs, and Inſignificant as they appear to Some Purpoſes; Become yet Wonderfully Serviceable in a Different Reſpect, and Directed to a Proper End. Thus what can Contribute more to the Improvement of Human Life, either by adding to the Pleaſures of Enjoyment, or by taking off from the Burden of Evil Accidents, than a Pittiful and tender Companion? One who Condoles our Calamities, Rejoyces at our Welfare, and Sympathiſes with every Paſſion: One who Charms with no more than a Tranſient Glance, and Creates no leſs than Tranſports in common Converſation. What then are the Effects of her more familiar, and affectionate Behaviour, of a Thouſand Little Endearments, Fondneſſes, and Careſſes! Theſe are the Labours of Woman's Life; theſe the Inſtruments of Man's Happineſs; thus employ'd ſhe anſwers one end of her own Creation, and helps to Compleat the Deſign of His.

# WOMAN THE CROWN OF THE Creation.

WHAT has been already Confirm'd in the former part of this Letter, concerning the Nature and Extent of that Assistance design'd us in the Creation of Woman, will be yet farther Recommended, by considering how Admirably well she Stands qualified for the Discharge of those Particular duties it Implies. This may be done, by taking a slight Survey of her Original Endownments, and acquired Virtues; which will at once Vindicate the Perfection of the Female Nature, and serve likewise to regulate our expectations of Advantage from it.

§. I.

## §. I. *EDUCATION.*

The Main of Woman's life depends much upon the manner of her Education: In order therefore to Declaim againſt the former with any Colour of Reaſon, or carry on the Deſign with any hopes of Succeſs, the latter is firſt of all to be Condemn'd.

The common method of Educating young Women is frequently Impeach'd under the Specious Accuſation of Vanity. And 'tis here Juſt as in other Caſes; we ſoon Agree in the Cenſorious part, to call ſomething Vain, but then as to the Rational, we are all Strangely Divided in our Opinions, wherein the Vanity of it does Conſiſt; a good Argument this with me, that the general Concluſion is Raſh and Unreaſonable. For when once an Opinion can be founded upon Reaſon, it has uſually one and the ſame Foundation among all the ſeveral Abetters of it.

To determine any action truly uſeful, or Vain, Regard muſt be always had to its Ultimate end, and deſign; for without this the Inſtruments of procuring the very beſt of Bleſſings, which one would think, are the fartheſt from vain, will nevertheleſs be reputed ſuch. And thus no kind of action whatever (while abſtracted from its end) can Poſſibly be free from Vanity: 'tis for want of this Neceſſary Caution, that the Ladies are ſo hardly Uſ'd in the caſe before us. Were their Education, and

the Natural Conſequences of it but Conſidered together and with one View, it would not appear to be Manag'd out of a Principle of vain glory, and oſtentation, but induſtriouſly contriv'd for the Improvement of their Nature, and the recommendation of their perſons. Their Leſſons are Innocent, and only Reſining a little upon the Simplicity of Nature. They teach how to raiſe pleaſurable Paſſions, and Produce agreeable Ideas, to touch the Sence, and Tranſport the very Soul; in a Word, the repeated Eſſays of their firſt Years, make the practice of their duty become Habitual to them, and they quickly commence Artiſts in the great buſineſs of their Lives.

## §. II. *CONVERSATION.*

Moſt of the Converſation between man and man, may be divided into Inſipid, and Contentious; ſuch as either affects not at all, or raiſes the worſt of Paſſions. We were never deſign'd, it ſeems, to converſe among our ſelves: *It is not good*, ſays the Text, *that Man ſhould be alone*: but the Ladies, Heavens be prais'd, are Sociable, and there lies our Refuge. When we are prety well mop'd with liſtning to one another's Dreams; or enrag'd by mutual Contradiction; we may repair to them for refreſhment in the one caſe, and in the other for peaceable Inſpirations. Their words Diſperſe incumbent Cares, and reſtore the Sickly mind; they civilize

civilize our Savage natures, and keep us from running into the Woods; they Quench the unruly heats of Anger, and Kindle the Kinder Flames of Love; they alter in Fine the whole Conſtitution, and make us eaſie within our ſelves, and affable to one another.

A great part of that *Je ne ſcay quoi*, or ſecret agreeableneſs in the Perſons of many Women, may be well enough accounted for, I believe, in their Converſation. No Wonder we receive ſuch a Multitude of Wounds without knowing all the while from whence they come: The cauſe is ſo very Obvious, it ſcapes our nicer Conſideration. *Cupid* lurks under the Tongue, Wraps up his Arrows in Delicious words, and then alaſs! he muſt needs Kill with every Expreſſion. A Woman's Eyes indeed may ſet fire to a Heart; but when that's done, it is her Breath muſt blow it into Flame.

There is nothing Incredible in theſe effects to One who is Acquainted never ſo little with the nature of Female Converſation. It is not Clogg'd with the heavy Circumſtances of Buſineſs; nor made Nauſeous by Pedantry, and Affectation; it partakes of nothing low, but Condeſcenſion; and all the Paſſion it admits is Love. 'Tis Infinitely Various, and Diverting in it's Matter; full of Innocence, and Ingenuity, recommended by good Language, and a graceful air of Elocution.

§. III.

## §. III. *WIT.*

The Ladies, ſome of us obſerve, are not generally ſo Witty as our ſelves. A great compliment upon them, I take it, if it were but ſuch in deſign: More cannot be ſaid in ſo few words for their Reputation; true Wit indeed is an excellent gift, and conducive to noble ends; but that which uſurps the name of it, and what we moſt judiciouſly value our ſelves upon, is nothing but the overflowings of a vicious and degenerate mind; ſerviceable only to the deſigns of Malice, and helps to bring peeviſhneſs, and the Spleen into Faſhion.

The Ladies we find are always pertinent in thought, as well as happy in expreſſion; and that is to be truly witty. But then they never recommend their parts at the expence of their Virtue, nor Sacrifice private Conſcience to publick Fame. In a word, if they are leſs witty than men, 'tis only becauſe they are better natur'd; and we have little reaſon, methinks, to boaſt of our underſtandings, ſo long as we have great reaſon to be aſham'd of our diſpoſitions.

## §. IV. *BEAUTY.*

'Tis in vain to offer at a general Definition of Beauty, and it can never be deſcrib'd in ſuch a manner, as will anſwer every private conception

of

of the Thing: Unleſs it were firſt poſſible for Contraries to be reconcil'd, or all men thought alike of the ſame ſubject.

It is without queſtion a Providential contrivance, that we are all made to think in a different manner from one another: the Advantage of it is particularly viſible in the caſe of Beauty, and our different conceptions of it. For did every Woman appear Equally charming in the Eyes of every Man; nothing, 'tis likely, would be able to ſet bounds to Luſt and Debauchery, beſides Death or Impotence.

The Bleſſings of handſom Women among us Bears, methinks, ſome kind of Reſemblance with that of Manna to the *Iſraelites*. For tho' 'tis true every Particle of That, had a capacity, they ſay, of Suiting with every Palate; whereas 'tis not every Woman can make her ſelf to be Admir'd of all; and ſo the comparſion Fails; there is nevertheleſs an Infinite variety of Beauties, for the like Variety of Conceptions; and the Parellel holds good in the main, viz. that Here, as well as in the Wilderneſs is Meat, for every Palate; only it may perhaps require, becauſe it deſerves indeed a little more pains to procure it.

I take care always, for my own part, never to decry any Woman for abſolutely Ugly; becauſe her perſon does not fall in with my particular notion of what is taking, and agreeable; for I make no doubt, but in all ſuch caſes, it Exactly anſwers the Idea, which One, or More have Fram'd to themſelves of a perfect Beauty.

## §. V. *RELIGION.*

The Ladies are not more unlike us in their natural Complexions, than in the Face of their Religion: and 'tis to be fear'd They wou'd come off equally gainers by either Compariſon. They ſeem to make more of the ſame Principles than we do, and Manage them to better Advantage. They preſerve the Subſtance of Religion, and let alone what ever is Snperfluous.

Female Education leads not towards any knowledge in the Controverſial parts of Divinity; and the Ladies are ſo many ſtanding Arguments of the Vanity of that ſort of Study. Controverſie, they well obſerve, Confounds Inſtead of Confuting; and as it always ſuppoſes Hereſy, ſo 'tis generally Productive of it. It is with good Reaſon therefore that they make no part in religious Diſputes, and thence are better Compos'd to look to their own Buſineſs, and leſs ſubject to Diſtraction amidſt their Devotions: They find no occaſion to Judge Uncharitably of others, and thereby Secure a good name to themſelves.

'Tis true there are Hereticks of both Sexes, and many Women are through a Pardonable eaſineſs of temper Seduc'd into wrong Perſwaſions; but they rarely offer a Hereſy to the World themſelves, or ſtand in the Front of a Novel Sect. They are Deluded, I ſay, by wicked Men; but have no thoughts of returning the Pious Fraud. To conclude, however

however They may ſtand Diſttinguiſh'd among Themſelves by a difference of Faith or Profeſſion ; the Wonderful Innocence and Charity of their Lives will raiſe them ever above the reſt of the Rational World.

## §. VI. *MODESTY.*

Modeſty is the Darling Attribute of Woman, the great Moral Diſtinction between her ſelf, and Man. This it is, that Recommends her Beauty, and Invigorates every Charm ; that upholds the Dignity of her Nature, and preſerves the whole Circle of her virtues Inviolable.

To talk of immodeſt Women is Nonſence ; there can be no ſuch: For to looſe their Modeſty, they muſt looſe a part of their Nature; and then they are no longer Women but Monſters : Conſequently ſuch as Degenerate in this particular, bring no Scandal upon the Sex, for they ceaſe to be members of it.

## §. VII. *LEARNING.*

We are apt to be mighty full of our ſelves, upon the Score of Learning; which, yet is the moſt Imperfect of any thing about us, and affords Infinite matter of Humiliation. It conſiſts, for the moſt part, in ſenſeleſs Words, and ſolemn Looks ; in Doubts, and Diſputations, in Pride, Prejudice and Error. Theſe are the Diſtinguiſhing Attainments of our own Sex; and and ſuch as give notable occaſion

caſion indeed of Triumph over the other. If we pretend to any real piece of Knowledge, which the Ladies are without; we do but diſcover our Pride without having any thing to ſupport it; and become ridiculouſly Sordid even before Poſſeſſion. They have the ſame Faculties of Soul with our ſelves, and the ſame Capacities of Underſtanding; otherwiſe I don't apprehend how they can be ſtyl'd a *Help-meet* for Us: But 'tis their peculiar Glory that they make uſe of theſe with Diſcretion, and to good Effect. In a word, they have Knowledge ſufficient to make their Lives uſeful, and their Ends happy: and all beyond this is toilſome in the purſuit, beſides that there is no ſuch thing as perfect Acquiſition.

## §. VIII *LOVE.*

Love is the Foundation of Happineſs, and it's Perfection: the Pleaſures of Earth are owing to it, and ſo are the Joys of Heaven. The meaſure of our Happineſs is proportioned to the Charms of our Beloved Object; for the more agreeable, That, the more intenſe our affections are, and Our ſelves by conſequence, ſo much the more happy.

All

All Objects, Conſider'd as Amiable, Don't Raiſe our Affections, we find, juſt to the ſame Pitch, nor Produce in us Equal Degrees of Pleaſure. One great Reaſon of this is, becauſe they all Differ in Nature, and Capacity; and Conſequently Act not upon our Minds in the ſame Manner, and with Equal advantage; But Each according to it's proper Nature, and Subordinate Powers. Some, for Inſtance, gain our Affections purely upon the account of what they are in themſelves; and by the Force of their Intrinſick, and Inherent Excellencies, without any particular Endearment, or further Recommendation; ſuch are things Inanimate, as curious Pictures, Beautiful Edifices, and the like: or Even Rational Creatures themſelves; ſo far as they are only Propos'd to us with their Natural, or Neceſſary Qualifications. Such Objects under ſo Imperfect a Notion as this, can at Beſt but provoke a very Feeble Paſſion, a Mixture perhaps of ſome Love, and more admiration. Other Objects advance with yet a ſtronger Charm; ſuch as in it ſelf is more Powerful than all the Reſt, and when in Conjunction with them, is Irreſiſtable. Theſe ſtrike with a Double advantage; They not only ſhine with abſolute, and Intrinſick Glory; but Voluntarily Exert It too. In ſhort, they return our Love, and ſtrengthen that Paſſion in our ſelves, by the Additional Powers of their own; and we become the very ſame thing to what we Love, which it's ſelf is to us. This is the Time, when Mutual Deſires of Union begin to grow

Furious, the Proſpect of it is Tranſporting, and the Union it ſelf Happineſs Unutterable.

What has been obſerv'd of Love in General, will naturally introduce the following Reflection, Viz. That we Men are indebted to the Ladies, for the compleateſt Happineſs our preſent Conſtitution can admit. We cannot but Love, as well as Admire, the Virtues reſiding in Female Minds: And the Curious and Delicate Structure of their Bodies will call ever for our Admiration. But then, when the Ladies Generouſly apply all theſe for our Service, and Satisfaction, with what Flowing Joys muſt we be fill'd! with what Raptures die away! In a word, the Perfection of the Female Nature is more than enough to fill our extended Capacities; and the Perſonal endearments of Woman-kind are able to command our utmoſt Affections. The inſtances of their Love are Judicious, and conſequently Affecting. They are ſo curiouſly manag'd, and with ſo much Art, that they become no leſs Acceptable in the ſmalleſt Trifles, than in matters of the greateſt Importance. Their Love is remarkably different from ours in two reſpects: It is not ſo ſoon Kindled, nor ſo quickly put Out. They don't gratifie with their warmeſt Affections on a ſudden: but the Recompence is, where once they fall, they Flame, and Burn immoveably for Ever.

§. IX.

## §. IX. *PRUDENCE.*

Prudence is a ſerious Conſideration of our own Condition, and a conſtant Management of ourſelves agreeable to the ſence we have of it. The Ladies, it muſt be confeſs'd, exceed us in this particular as much as in any other. As for thoſe who have not this conviction upon their Minds, they may be ſatisfy'ed by running over diſtinctly the ſeveral Circumſtances, Relations, and Capacities, of almoſt any individual of the Sex, and obſerving her proper Care, and Prudential Conduct thereupon: Her Devotion to Heaven, and Charity to Man-kind, Her Piety to Parents, and Affection to Children, Her Love to her Husband, Her Clemency to Servants, &c. And afterwards by looking back upon their own Behaviour in ſome of the ſame, or parellel caſes, and obſerving the many Abſurdities committed in each of them.

## §. X. *DIVERSION.*

'Tis a common Complaint among the Enemies of the Fair Sex, That too much of their Time is ſpent

ſpent in Eaſe and Pleaſure, and conſequently too little of it Reſerv'd for Buſineſs, and the neceſſary Diſcharge of their Duty. Now this Objection will appear Frivolous, and of no Force, if we do but conſider it's firſt *Riſe* It proceeds from a miſtaken Notion of Duty in General: Theſe Men look upon Labour and Difficulty, as Things eſſential to the Performance of whatever is Commanded by Authority; and imagine a Thing is then done Beſt, when it occaſions moſt Vexation and Pains. Thus I have known ſome Perſons pretend to a more than ordinary Share of Religion, only becauſe they Tormented themſelves, more than Others did, about it; and were Ready to Condemn all ſuch as ſerv'd God chearfully, and took a more Rational Freedom in the innocent Improvement of Life. And thus I am perſwaded it is with the Men I am now ſpeaking of. They cannot allow the Ladies to be doing their Duty, ſo long as they put themſelves to no viſible Pain in the Proſecution of it; when at the ſame time the only way for them to do it Effectually, is to do it Delightfully, and after their own Humour. They are naturally Diſpos'd to accompliſh thoſe Ends for which they were deſign'd; and they then take the readieſt way to attain 'em, when they purſue them in a Manner moſt Eaſie and Pleaſant to themſelves.

What

What has a kinder Influence upon the Mind of Man than Woman Singing ? What will ſooner Raiſe his Drooping Spirits, or Slacken his ſtormy Reſolution ? What can we deſire more than to hear the Voice of a Syren, and never feel her Violence ? What Joys like thoſe of being Raviſh'd with the Muſick, without being Ruin'd by the Monſter ? The Ladies are all Sincere ; their Songs full of Harmony and Love. And ſhall we be Offended at our own Happineſs, becauſe the Authors of it are Partakers with us, and repeat with Pleaſure what we hear with Tranſport ? Shall we deny the Sweetneſs of the Charm, or not admit it to our Ears ? O ſenſeleſs Obſtinacy ! o barbarous Stupidity !

Again, Nothing adds a diviner Grace to the Perſon of a Woman, than a proper Motion, a becoming Mien. *Æneas* was no longer Ignorant of the Goddeſs his Mother, than till ſhe Mov'd : He knew her by her heavenly Gate.

There is not any thing more Affecting, among all the ſilent Endearments of the Sex. *Cupid* Rejoyces at a Dancing Match, and Triumphs at a Ball ; and, ſhall we Condemn the Ladies for uſing ſuch an Exercise ? For my part, I ſee no place for Cenſure : Thoſe who do, I remit to the former part of this Letter, where they will find, That the Life of Woman ought to be Eaſie, as well as Uſeful ; and ſhe may very reaſonably conſult her own Happineſs, even there, where ſhe is principally promotirg Ours.

Thus, *Madam*, have I attempted, your Commands, according to that Brevity, and Method, You were pleas'd to Recommend. I haue given you my Thoughts, wherein the proper Buſineſs of your Sex, ſo far as it relates to our own, does conſiſt ; and conſider'd Briefly, how well you are diſpos'dby Nature and Inclination for it.

The Conclusion of all is, That you Ladies were made to be Happy yourselves, and to make us so; and that as your own Happiness is the first End of your own Being, so 'tis the first Step too to the Happiness of ours.

This Argument might, I confess, be much improv'd by making use of different Considerations, and enlarging farther upon each: But you guess'd aright of my Incapacity, and accordingly confin'd my Pen. Nor have I cause to Complain of the Restraint; for I have so shamefully mang'd the Best Cause in this little Compass, that a greater Liberty could have only turn'd to my greater Confusion: But all this Acknowledgment of mine, is downright Transgressing the Character of my own Sex. 'Tis much more Natural for us to be Conceited with our own Performances, to magnify a little Merit in our own Eyes, and then claim a Reward as Vast as our partial Imagination. You must needs be Sensible, *Madam*, of this common Infirmity among us; and I beseech you, Consider it: For there is nothing else, I know, of can excuse me, if in consideration of this Imperfect Trifle, I presume to do my self so much Honour, as to Subscribe my self,

*Madam, with all Humility,*

*your most faithful Servant,*

**Philogynes.**